Lothian Autistic Society in West Lothian Day Care of Children

8 Auldhill Road
Bridgend
Linlithgow
EH49 6PD

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 October 2026

Service provided by:
Lothian Autistic Society

Service provider number:
SP2003002777

Service no:
CS2003011786

About the service

Lothian Autistic Society in West Lothian is a daycare of children's service, registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at any one time, aged five years to 18 years. There is a peripatetic manager arrangement in place as the manager of Lothian Autistic Society Support Services (CS2017353607) and Lothian Autistic Society Edinburgh Daycare (CS2007156209).

The service operates from a community centre in Bridgend which is on one level. They have use of the large hall, toilet facilities and kitchen. There is direct access to the large park area next to the setting.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Friday 23 October 2026 between 10:30 and 14:45 when we visited the offices to meet with staff. We visited the service on Saturday 24 October between 09:00 and 12:30.

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed how children were supported by staff
- spoke with eight staff and management
- observed practice and how staff worked together
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children's individual needs were met by staff who knew them well which supported their rights and choices.
- Leaders had a clear vision for the development of the service that would enable change to be sustained through shared values.
- There was a shared commitment from staff and leaders to make improvements that promoted positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation systems should continue to be developed so that progress is monitored and leads to positive outcomes for children.
- To build staff skill and knowledge across the team, the range of learning and professional development opportunities should be extended to support individual roles and responsibilities.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

There was a shared commitment to meet the needs of children and families. Although the vision, values and aims had not been reviewed, staff described feeling valued and involved in developing the service. There were plans in place to review the vision, values and aims with children, families and staff so that future priorities reflect what matters to them.

Quality assurance and self-assessment had been used to evaluate the service. As a result, a meaningful action plan identified priorities that had led to practical improvements. For example, communication was more effective as all staff had walkie-talkies. Whether in the service or on trips, staff felt more confident as they could contact colleagues for support, if needed. In addition, some policies and procedures had been updated to reflect current practice and guide staff. These were readily available at the service and helped staff practice as they were easily accessible. Leaders should continue to strengthen quality assurance to demonstrate whether changes consistently improve children's experiences and outcomes. Clear measures and regular review would help them identify what was working, address remaining gaps and sustain improvements.

Leadership support at the service included time spent getting to know staff and observing practice. Staff spoke positively about leaders being more available and responsive to issues they raised. Practical changes, including improved storage, more resources and the creation of an area for staff breaks, demonstrated that their views had been acted on. These developments showed that staff feedback was valued and used to support their wellbeing.

Staff valued the opportunities to develop elements of the service. For example, updating children's personal plans in a format that enabled important information to be gathered. Their involvement had increased staff confidence as they felt views and input mattered. Leaders should continue to empower staff, so they are part of the improvement journey. Reflections across the staff team could contribute to and sustain improvements which promote positive outcomes for children.

Procedures to employ staff had improved which supported safe recruitment. Leaders should continue to develop the recruitment process by recording how information gathered was assessed to inform appointment decisions. This would provide a clearer record of the provider's assessment of applicants' suitability to work with children. This would further evidence that children were supported by staff who had been safely recruited and their practice influenced by national guidance.

The induction procedures had been improved to help new staff prepare for their roles. The programme included an overview of the service and a shadow shift before starting. Staff talked positively about the process as it enabled them to ask questions, learn routines and get to know children and colleagues. The introduction of service folders contained information they could refer to if unsure about something. To build on this, the programme could be evaluated to assess how it has supported staff in their role. This information could help identify learning needs to develop the skills and knowledge of staff across the team.

A training plan tracked mandatory training. Leaders had identified the need to provide further opportunities for staff to talk about their work. Individual discussions and supervision would help staff reflect on their role and identify relevant learning. This should include support for those with leadership responsibilities to develop management skills.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

Staff used their knowledge of children's interests and preferences to set up spaces which supported children's needs. This enabled them to choose where to play or seek calmer spaces if they needed quiet time. As staff prepared and set up resources before they arrived, children settled quickly because activities that interested them were ready to use. Children enjoyed play experiences that gave them choices about how to spend their time. They chose activities in the hall and could move between indoor and outdoor play. Some children sustained their involvement in their chosen activities. This supported children to follow their interests and play at a pace that suited them.

There were opportunities to become involved in planned activities. We saw that children had fun taking part in group games and action songs. Those who preferred quieter experiences could choose other activities. This balance helped children participate in ways that suited their preferences and contributed to a calm atmosphere.

Children benefited from sensitive support that respected their choices. Staff stayed nearby while giving children time and space to develop their own play. They waited for children's cues before offering resources or supporting their decisions about playing indoors or outdoors. These unhurried interactions helped children remain in control of their play and enjoy experiences at their own pace.

Outdoor play offered children opportunities to develop independence, skills and confidence. Staff supported children to take risks when using the swings and zip wire. This enabled children to challenge themselves through physical play.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

Children received a warm welcome when they arrived. Staff asked how they were and responded to their individual needs and preferences. For example, children who preferred to observe before joining activities were supported to do so. This helped children experience care that respected their choices and supported them to feel comfortable in the service.

Children benefited from communication that reflected their preferences. Staff shared practical information about children's communication, interests and support needs. Newer staff told us that they could ask questions and seek advice from more experienced colleagues. This supported a shared understanding of how to respond to and support children in a consistent way.

Mealtimes were organised around children's support needs. Resources helped children remain seated for longer while eating, and staff sat alongside them. Staff also supervised children who moved around during meals. These arrangements supported children to eat in a supervised environment that took account of their individual needs.

Personal plans had been updated and contained detailed information about children's needs and the approaches used to support them. This included information to help staff recognise when children were finding it difficult to manage their emotions. Staff told us that the plans and risk assessments were clearer, more detailed and easier to use when supporting a child they knew less well. This gave staff more accessible information to guide individualised care. Staff were beginning to review personal plans more often, including checking whether support strategies were effective. This work needed to become embedded in everyday practice so that plans continued to reflect children's changing needs. The service should build on information-sharing across the team and use reviews to check that agreed approaches consistently supported positive outcomes for children.

Staff spoke positively about further developing the use of an electronic platform to record information alongside paper records. As this progressed, the service should ensure that information remained current, clear and accessible across both systems so that staff could use it consistently when supporting children. The service had updated its systems for storing and administering medication, with improvements to record keeping. This was a positive step towards bringing arrangements into line with guidance.

Connections with families helped staff gather up-to-date information about children. Records showed when families had been contacted for information. This supported personal planning to reflect children's current circumstances and helped staff respond to their needs.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 30 May 2026, the provider must implement safety protocols to ensure the safety of young people when using the outdoor space at the service.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

a) Ensure all staff are provided with an effective way of communicating with other staff when accessing the outdoor area.

b) Ensure that young people are sufficiently supervised while using the outdoor area.

c) Ensure that all entrances and fire doors are secure and effectively monitored by staff, and that they are not held open by a fire hydrant at any time.

To be completed by: 30 May 2026. This is in order to comply with: Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) 1.25: "I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors."

This requirement was made on 12 March 2026.

Action taken on previous requirement

All staff on duty had walkie talkies to communicate with each other. Everyone we spoke with, told us about the benefits they felt as they were able to communicate quickly and effectively with colleagues, should they need help or assistance.

We saw that young people were supervised well when outdoors. The external doors were closed, and staff were vigilant which ensured they knew if any young person left the building.

We saw that staff had access to additional door fobs which allowed secure access to the service.

Met - outwith timescales

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support young people's health and wellbeing needs, the provider must ensure all staff have access to induction training appropriate to their role. This should include but is not limited to, a robust induction and staff training programme, and a review of staff competence and confidence prior to supporting young people.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) 3.14: "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes."

This area for improvement was made on 18 March 2026.

Action taken since then

Staff now receive an induction and complete a shadow shift before officially starting work.

All staff we spoke with, felt this was very beneficial as they knew what to expect. Service folders have been introduced with P&P, forms and procedures.

Informal feedback at the moment of the changes; there is potential to develop more formal opportunities to gather views of staff, to measure the outcome of this.

Project leads feedback is positive as new staff not in ratio and takes away stress for covering when someone new starts and they have a shadow shift.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.scot) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good

Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

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